

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Final Office Action dated November 18, 2005, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on February 18, 2006. Claims 1-43, 46-53, 55-65, and 67-84 are pending in the application. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) because a restraining member comprising a separate component coupled to the respective expandable tubing section to form the hinge therebetween was not shown in the drawings. In response, Applicants have added Figure 7 to illustrate a restraining member as a separate component. Applicants respectfully request the objection to the drawings be removed.

Claim Objections

The Examiner objected to claim 1 due to an informality. Applicants have cancelled claim 1, thereby obviating the rejection.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 9-15, 71-76, and 80 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Campbell* '745. The Examiner rejected claims 43 and 47-50 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Lohbeck*. The Examiner rejected claims 56-61, 63-65, 81-82, and 84 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Campbell, et al.*, '109. Applicants have cancelled claims 1-6, 9-15, 43, 47-50, 56-61, 63-65, 71-76, 80, 81-82, and 84, thereby obviating the rejection.

The Examiner rejected claims 16, 24, and 77-78 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Strickland, et al.* (U.S. 4,770,448). Applicants respectfully traverse

the rejection of claims 16 and 77 and Applicants have amended claim 24 to include the limitations of claim 27. Additionally, Applicants have cancelled claim 78.

Claims 16 and 77 and amended claim 24 include the limitation of the lead thread flanks of the threaded male portion disposed at an angle different from that of the lead thread flanks of the threaded female portion. *Strickland, et al.* does not show the lead thread flanks of a threaded male portion disposed at an angle different from that of the lead thread flanks of a threaded female portion. Rather, *Strickland, et al.* discloses a coupling whereby the thread angle and the pitch are varied not the thread flank angle. (See *Strickland, et al.* col. 3, lines 15-20) In fact, *Strickland, et al.* states the axial load distribution between the individual thread flanks is achieved by making the female thread pitch of the coupling longer by an increment in comparison to the pitch of the male thread on the pipe. (See *Strickland, et al.* col. 3, lines 24-26) Therefore, *Strickland, et al.* fails to teach each and every limitation in claims 16, 24 and 77. This failure precludes *Strickland, et al.* from anticipating claims 16, 24, and 77. Applicants submit that claims 16, 24, and 77 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request withdrawal of the § 102(b) rejection.

Additionally, claims 17-19 depend from claim 16 and claim 25 depends from claim 24 and these claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 16 and 24.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected claims 20-23 and 26 as being obvious over *Strickland, et al.* Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. Claims 20-23 depend from claim 16 and claim 26 depends from claim 24. As set forth above, *Strickland, et al.* fails to disclose all the limitations of claims 16 and 24. Therefore, claims 20-23 and 26 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claims 16 and 24.

The Examiner rejected claims 67-70 as being obvious over *Campbell '745* in view of PCT WO 00/0831. Applicants have cancelled claims 67-70, thereby obviating the rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner objected to claims 7-8 and 51-53 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. In response, Applicants have rewritten claims 7-8 and 51-53 as new claims 85-89, respectively. Applicants believe that new claims 85-89 are in condition for allowance and respectfully request the same.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

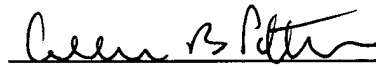
According to the Office Action Summary, the Examiner indicated that none of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received. In response, Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner to the Claim to Priority that was filed on December 4, 2003. For convenience, a copy of the Claim to Priority is attached herewith.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the references cited by the Examiner, alone or in combination, do not teach, show, or suggest the invention as claimed.

Having addressed all issues set out in the Final Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,



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